



P000 Basic Information

## P040 Permit Imprints

**Summary** P040 describes basic information of the indicia preparation, content and format. It also runs through the specifications for mailing.

### 1.0 BASIC INFORMATION

**Definition** 1.1 A mailer may be authorized to mail material without affixing postage if payment is made at the time of mailing from an advance deposit account established with the USPS for that purpose. This postage payment method may be used for postage for Standard Mail and for postage and special service fees for First-Class Mail and Package Services. This method is not available for Periodicals or Express Mail.

**Identification** 1.2 Each mailpiece sent under this payment method must bear a permit imprint indicia showing that postage is paid.

**Weighing** 1.3 Permit imprint mailings with postage paid by advance deposit account must be presented to the USPS for weighing, unless otherwise authorized by BMS.

**Combination** 1.4 Mailpieces paid with permit imprint may be combined in the same mailing with pieces paid with other methods only if authorized by the USPS.

**Permit and Fees** 1.5 A mailer may obtain a permit to use a permit imprint indicia and pay postage in cash before or at the time of mailing by submitting Form 3615 and the applicable fee to the post office where mailings are made. There is no other fee for the use of a permit imprint indicia as long as the permit remains active, but other fees (e.g., an annual presort mailing fee) may be due depending on the class of mail to be prepared.

**Information** 1.6 If requested by the USPS, a permit holder (and its agent, if applicable) must provide in a timely manner complete information (as specified in [3.4](#)) about mailings or mailpieces for which postage was paid using its company permit imprint.

**Suspension** 1.7 The USPS may immediately suspend the authorization to use a permit imprint if the permit holder or its agent refuses or fails to provide information as specified in [1.6](#).

**Revocation** 1.8 A permit may be revoked for use in operating any unlawful scheme or enterprise, for nonuse during any 2-year period, for refusal to provide information about permit imprint use or mailings, or for noncompliance with any standard applicable to permit imprints. The permit holder may make a written appeal to the postmaster within 10 days of receipt of the notice.

**Use** 1.9 Permit imprint indicia may be printed directly on mailpieces, on labels (including address labels) permanently affixed to mailpieces, or on mailpiece wrappers, envelopes, and other containers. Except where the enclosure is prohibited by other standards, matter bearing a permit imprint indicia may be mailed as an enclosure when postage for the enclosure or the host matter is not paid with the enclosed permit imprint, and the enclosed permit imprint indicia is not visible when the matter is mailed.

## 2.0 INDICIA PREPARATION

- Production Method**  
2.1 Embossed or unembossed permit imprint indicia may be made by printing press, hand stamp, lithography, mimeograph, multigraph, address plate, or similar device. They may not be typewritten or hand-drawn.
- Standards**  
2.2 The content and format of a permit imprint indicia must meet the standards below. No other formats may be used.
- Legibility**  
2.3 The permit imprint indicia must be legible and of a color that contrasts sufficiently with the paper and the indicia's background for readability. A different color may be used to highlight the background of an indicia.
- Placement**  
2.4 The entire permit imprint indicia must be aligned parallel with the address of the mailpiece and placed in the upper right corner of the address side, of the address area, or of the address label, subject to these conditions:
- a. The indicia must not encroach on reserved space on the mailpiece (e.g., the OCR read area) if such a standard applies.
  - b. The position (but not the format) of the indicia may be varied so that data processing equipment can simultaneously print the address, indicia, and other postal information.
- References to Expedited Handling**  
2.5 Except for postcard-size mail and permit imprint indicia placed on address labels, indicia on Standard Mail pieces bearing references to expedited handling or delivery (e.g., "Priority," "Express," "Overnight") must:
- a. Show the words "Presorted Standard" (or "PRSRT STD") or "Nonprofit Organization" (or "Nonprofit Org." or "Nonprofit") more prominently than other words in the indicia.
  - b. Include a clear space of at least 3/8 inch around the entire indicia.

## 3.0 INDICIA CONTENT

- First-Class Mail and Priority Mail**  
3.1 A permit imprint indicia on First-Class Mail or Priority Mail must show "First-Class Mail" or "Priority Mail" (or "Priority"), as applicable; "U.S. Postage Paid"; city and state; and permit number. The "Priority Mail" (or "Priority") marking may be omitted when using USPS-provided Priority Mail envelopes and containers. The indicia may show the mailing date, amount of postage paid, or the number of ounces for which postage is paid. The ZIP Code of the permit holder may be shown directly after the state name or in a separate inscription reading "ZIP Code 00000," when that ZIP Code does not create uncertainty about the permit holder's correct address or permit number. Instead of printing the city and state of mailing in the indicia, the mailer may print "Mailed From ZIP Code," followed by the 5-digit ZIP Code assigned to the postmaster of the mailing office. The indicia may also include required rate markings.
- Standard Mail and Package Services**  
3.2 A Standard Mail or Package Services permit imprint indicia must contain the same information required in 3.1 for a First-Class Mail indicia, except "First-Class Mail" or "Priority Mail" (or "Priority") must be omitted. The indicia may include the amount of postage paid, the weight of the piece, and rate markings as required. The indicia must not include the mailing date.
- Special Services**  
3.3 Permit imprint mail with special services also paid with a permit must show "First-Class Mail" (if First-Class Mail); "U.S. Postage and Fees Paid"; city and state; and permit number. The city, state, and permit number may be omitted in a company permit imprint indicia, subject to 3.4.

**Company Permit Imprint**  
3.4

A company permit imprint is one in which the exact name of the company or individual holding the permit is shown in the indicia in place of the city, state, and permit number. A customer may use a company permit imprint if:

- a. For 1 year from the date of mailing, the permit holder or its agent keeps records for each mailing paid with a company permit imprint and makes them available for USPS review on request. These records include (for each version of what was mailed, if applicable) the weight of a single piece; the total number of pieces mailed; the total postage; the date(s) and post office(s) of mailing; and other records required by the postage rate claimed or the payment method used. A complete sample mailpiece must be included for each identical-weight mailing, or each commingled or combined version in a nonidentical-weight mailing. Sample pieces are not required for nonidentical-piece Standard Mail and Package Services machinable or irregular parcel mailings (e.g., merchandise and other fulfillment mailings).
- b. Each mailpiece bears a complete domestic return address. The return address on official mail is subject to the corresponding standards. On unendorsed Standard Mail and Bound Printed Matter, the return address is permitted below the indicia. Except for official mail, if the return address is *not* the physical location at which the USPS may review the records listed in [3.4a](#) (i.e., where they are kept or can be made available) or is *not* a point of contact from which such a physical location can be readily determined, the mailer must:
  - (1) Include in the indicia the 5-digit ZIP Code of the physical location at which the records listed in [3.4a](#) are either kept or can be made available for USPS review.
  - (2) Provide the postmaster of that post office with a complete sample mailpiece (except as noted above); the date(s) and post office(s) of mailing; and the name and local address of the party from whom the records listed in [3.4a](#) may be obtained.

#### 4.0 INDICIA FORMAT

**Basic Standard**  
4.1

Unless prepared under the option in [4.2](#), permit imprint indicia for ordinary mail, official mail, and Mailgrams must be prepared in one of the formats exemplified in [Exhibit 4.1a](#) or [Exhibit 4.1b](#), as applicable to the rate claimed or type of mail. (Not all permissible combinations of content elements are shown.) Specific markings may be required by the standards for the rate claimed.

**Optional Format**  
4.2

Permit imprint indicia may be prepared in a format other than the basic format described in [4.1](#), subject to these conditions:

- a. The rule that forms a box around the content of the indicia may be omitted if the content remains as specified in [3.0](#) and [Exhibit 4.1a](#) or [Exhibit 4.1b](#).
- b. Unless printed directly on an address label, the indicia content specified in [3.0](#) must be placed within a clear area no smaller than 1/2 inch high and 1/2 inch wide, no more than 1-1/2 inches below or left from the upper right corner of the mailpiece or of the address area when oriented to read the address, regardless of processing category or postage rate claimed. If printed on an address label (including paper, adhesive, and multilayer sandwich labels), the space allowed for the indicia content in [3.0](#) must be rectangular, large enough to ensure legibility of that content from a normal reading distance and to separate it from other information on the label, and located in the upper right corner of the label when oriented to read the address.



**Indicia Formats for  
Mailgram and  
Official Mail**  
Exhibit 4.1a

**Mailgram**

MAILGRAM  
POSTAL CHARGES  
PAID  
WESTERN UNION

**First-Class Official Mail**

FIRST-CLASS MAIL  
POSTAGE & FEES PAID  
AGENCY NAME  
PERMIT NO. G-999

PRESORTED  
FIRST-CLASS MAIL  
POSTAGE & FEES PAID  
AGENCY NAME  
PERMIT NO. G-999

FIRST-CLASS MAIL  
AUTO  
POSTAGE & FEES PAID  
AGENCY NAME  
PERMIT NO. G-999

**Standard Mail Official Mail**

PRSRT STD  
POSTAGE & FEES PAID  
AGENCY NAME  
PERMIT NO. G-999

PRESORTED STANDARD  
AUTO CR  
POSTAGE & FEES PAID  
AGENCY NAME  
PERMIT NO. G-999

PRSRT STD  
AUTO  
POSTAGE & FEES PAID  
AGENCY NAME  
PERMIT NO. G-999

**Package Services Official Mail**

POSTAGE & FEES PAID  
AGENCY NAME  
PERMIT NO. G-999

MEDIA MAIL  
POSTAGE & FEES PAID  
AGENCY NAME  
PERMIT NO. G-999

PRSRT  
BOUND PRINTED MATTER  
POSTAGE & FEES PAID  
AGENCY NAME  
PERMIT NO. G-999

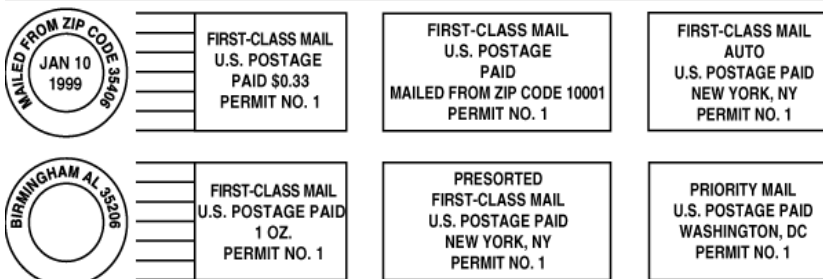
**Note:** These are only examples; not all possible variations are shown. When not in indicia, class or rate must be marked on mailpiece (see [M012](#)).

- c. No printing appears in the indicia other than that required or allowed under [3.0](#).
- d. Except as required to enclose the permit information, no printing appears above or to the right of the permit information when the indicia is printed directly on the mailpiece or within the address area or on the address label.
- e. Except for indicia printed on address labels, the permit information is printed in no smaller than 4-point type. In indicia printed on address labels under [4.2b](#), the permit information must be legible.
- f. Except as required to enclose the permit information, decorative designs intended to be part of the indicia design must appear below or to the left of the permit information in an area extending no farther than 4-1/2 inches to the left of the right edge, and 1-1/2 inches below the top edge of the mailpiece, address area, or address label, as applicable. Such designs must not resemble or imitate a postage meter imprint, postage stamp, postcard postage, or other postage payment method; and they must not include words, symbols, or designs used by the USPS to identify a class of mail, rate of postage, or level of service, *unless* such elements are correctly used under the applicable standards for the mailpiece on which they appear and the corresponding postage and fees have been paid.
- g. All other applicable standards in [1.0](#) through [5.0](#) are met.

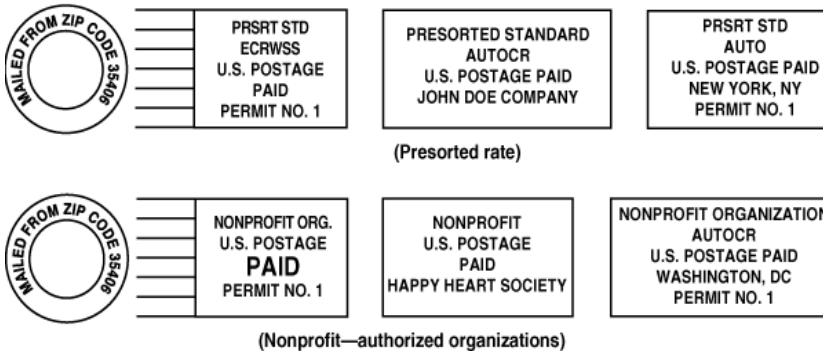
## Indicia Formats

### Exhibit 4.1b

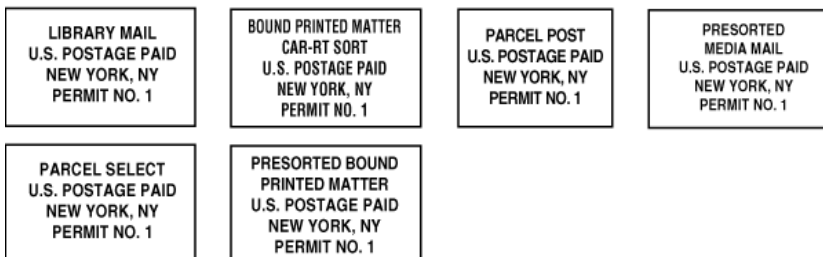
#### First-Class Mail



#### Standard Mail



#### Package Services Mail



**Note:** These are only examples; not all possible variations are shown. When not in indicia, class or rate must be marked on mailpiece (see [M012](#)).

## 5.0 MAILINGS

### Minimum Quantity

#### 5.1

Permit imprint mailings must contain at least 200 pieces or 50 pounds, except:

- Other higher minimum quantities may apply, depending on the rate claimed.
- An occasional First-Class mailing may contain fewer than 200 pieces if from a mailer whose total daily mailings are not much more than 200 pieces but who, to cooperate with the post office, presents a part of that mail early in the day.
- A mailing may contain fewer than 200 pieces if it is the completion of a large mailing extending over 2 or more consecutive days and the mailer includes an explanation on the accompanying postage statement.



- d. Single-piece rate mailings submitted under the terms of an approved manifest mailing system agreement with a minimum volume reduction provision.

**Identical Weight**  
5.2

All pieces in a permit imprint mailing must be of identical weight unless otherwise authorized by the USPS.

**Preparation of Mailing**  
5.3

All pieces in a permit imprint mailing must be faced (i.e., positioned with all addresses in the same direction, unless counterstacked under the applicable standards) and meet the preparation standards for the rate claimed. Mail claimed at a postage rate that varies by zone must be separated by zone when mailed, unless otherwise authorized by the USPS.

**Place of Mailing**  
5.4

Mail must be deposited and accepted at the post office that issued the permit, at a time and place designated by the postmaster, except as otherwise provided for plant-verified drop shipments.

**Postage Statement**  
5.5

Postage statements must be submitted as specified by [P012](#) and the standards for the rate claimed.

**Prepayment**  
5.6

Payment must be made for each mailing, either in cash or through an advance deposit account, before the mailing can be released for processing. Funds to pay postage must be deposited as directed by the USPS. If the funds paid or on deposit are less than that necessary to pay for a mailing, the difference must be paid or deposited before the mailing or other permit imprint mailings can be accepted. Credit for postage is not allowed. Postage may not be paid partly in money and partly by postage stamps unless permitted by standard.

**6.0 MAILGRAM**

**Indicia and Marking**  
6.1

Western Union Mailgram messages are enclosed in window envelopes that bear the Mailgram imprint in the upper right corner of the address side. The envelopes also have a blue background with the registered trademark “Western Union Mailgram” and the USPS emblem to the right.

**Postal Charges**  
6.2

Postal charges for Western Union Mailgram messages are paid at USPS Headquarters by Western Union. Postage for delivery of Western Union Mailgram message envelopes is not paid or collected at local post offices.